



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **First 5 San Bernardino Brightens Christmas for Children**

***First 5 program working with Toys for Tots to distribute 2,500 educational toys  
to young children throughout San Bernardino County***

**(San Bernardino, CA)** – Many young children will find this Christmas more exciting and enlightening through the special efforts of First 5 San Bernardino and the Toys for Tots Foundation. At its meeting yesterday, the Children and Families Commission, which oversees the First 5 program, approved a \$25,000 agreement with the Marine Corps Reserve's Toys for Tots foundation to distribute educational toys during this upcoming holiday season. Toys that promote early childhood development will be provided by Toys for Tots, working with other agencies, to children throughout San Bernardino County.

"The toys will be educational as well as fun for the kids," said First District San Bernardino County Supervisor Bill Postmus, who chairs First 5 San Bernardino.

"Early brain development research shows tremendous value in young children being provided with age- and developmentally appropriate toys."

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A toy expands the imagination and creativity of a child, which, in turn, positively stimulates brain development. Studies show that children who receive such early benefit are more likely to be successful in school, be lifelong learners and to lead healthier, more productive lives.

Toys for Tots is the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve's premier community action program, one of the nation's best-known Christmas charitable causes. The goal of the program is to ensure every needy child receives at least one shiny new toy at Christmas.

According to Colonel Anthony Weddington, Officer In Charge of the Reserve Support Unit at Twentynine Palms, nearly 19,000 toys were distributed to more than 8,000 children in San Bernardino County last year. He estimates that as a result of First 5's donation, this year's program will grow by about 25%, reaching even more children with gifts that represent hope for a healthy future.

"We work with individual families, community agencies and church groups to best serve the community," said Col. Weddington. "The intent is to provide a message of hope for the county's youngest residents to motivate them to grow into responsible, productive citizens and community leaders."

The First 5 program, established through the California Children and Families First Act of 1998, works with service agencies to optimize early childhood development. San Bernardino County receives an allocation of approximately \$27 million each year from a statewide, fifty-cent tax on tobacco products. Since the Commission's inception, thousands of children prenatal to age five and their families have benefited from the quality services provided through the program. For more information, contact First 5 or visit their website at [www.sanbernardinokids.org](http://www.sanbernardinokids.org)

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